

Claims

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. An electronic order and inventory information management system for use in managing a restaurant, comprising:
 - a portable hand-held data entry terminal having a display and having means for inputting restaurant order information, said data entry terminal having a transceiver for transmitting said order information;
 - a database having a plurality of product records associated with products offered for sale at the restaurant, each product record including at least a menu selling price, a present inventory quantity, and an identifier associated with a vendor;
 - a host computer having a transceiver for receiving said transmitted order information, said host computer being electrically connected to said database and to a wide-area computer network;
 - means in said host computer for decrementing a respective inventory quantity of a respective product record corresponding to a respective product when said respective product is included in said transmitted order information; and
 - means in said host computer for transmitting a signal along said wide-area computer network to a vendor computer corresponding to a respective vendor identifier when said respective inventory quantity is less than a predetermined quantity, said signal being indicative of an order for an additional quantity of said respective product.

1 2. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 1 wherein
2 said host computer includes network circuitry for establishing a local area network between
3 said host computer and remote network terminals;

4 said order and inventory information management system further comprising:

5 a kitchen terminal electrically connected to said local area network and
6 having a display for displaying a portion of said transmitted order
7 information pertaining to a food order, said kitchen terminal adapted to
8 transmit messages back to said host computer indicative of fulfillment
9 of said food order;

10 a drink terminal electrically connected to said local area network and having
11 a display for displaying a portion of said transmitted order information
12 pertaining to a drink order, said drink terminal adapted to transmit
13 messages back to said host computer indicative of fulfillment of said
14 drink order.

1 3. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 1 wherein
2 said host computer includes means for associating said transmitted order information with
3 respective menu selling prices from said database.

1 4. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 3 further
2 comprising a billing terminal electrically connected to said local area network for receiving
3 said transmitted order information and said associated menu selling prices, said billing terminal
4 including means for calculating a total order sales amount and means for printing said
5 transmitted order information and said total order sales amount.

1 5. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 1 wherein
2 said order information includes at least one customer seating location identifier and at least one
3 food selection associated with said at least one seating location identifier, said at least one food
4 selection corresponding to a respective product record.

1 6. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 1 wherein
2 said data entry terminal comprises:
3 a housing having front and back sides, said display positioned on said front side;
4 a handle fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and adapted to be gripped by a
5 waiter's hand for holding said data entry terminal.

1 7. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 6 further
2 comprising a support member fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and having a
3 generally arcuate configuration adapted to rest upon a forearm of a waiter when holding said
4 data entry terminal.

1 8. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 1 wherein
2 said means for inputting restaurant order information comprises:
3 means for displaying on said display a graphical representation of a plurality of table
4 locations and a plurality of seat locations associated with each table location;
5 means for displaying on said display a menu of food and drink items corresponding to
6 said plurality of product records in said database; and
7 a keypad and a plurality of buttons on said data entry terminal adjacent said display
8 adapted to enable a waiter to select a table and seat location of a patron whose

9 order is being taken and to select respective food and drink items ordered by said
10 patron.

1 9. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 8 further
2 comprising means for displaying a graphical representation of a single table once a waiter has
3 selected a table location of a patron whose order is being taken, said graphical representation of
4 a single table being positioned adjacent said display of a menu of food items upon said display.

1 10. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 8 wherein
2 said means for displaying a graphical representation of a plurality of table locations includes
3 means for displaying only those table locations assigned to be served by a selected waiter.

11. An electronic order and inventory information management system for use in
managing a restaurant, comprising:

- a portable hand-held data entry terminal having a display and having means for inputting
restaurant order information, said data entry terminal having a transceiver for
transmitting said order information;
- a database having a plurality of product records associated with products offered for sale
at the restaurant, each product record including at least a menu selling price, a
present inventory quantity, and an identifier associated with a vendor;
- a host computer having a transceiver for receiving said transmitted order information,
said host computer connected to said database and connected to a wide-area
computer network;
- means in said host computer for associating said transmitted order information with
respective menu selling prices from said plurality of product records in said
database;
- means in said host computer for decrementing a respective inventory quantity of a
respective product record corresponding to a respective product when said
respective product is included in said transmitted order information;
- means in said host computer for transmitting a signal along said wide-area network to a
vendor computer corresponding to a respective vendor identifier when said
respective inventory quantity is less than a predetermined quantity, said signal
being indicative of an order for an additional quantity of said respective product;
and

wherein said host computer includes network circuitry for establishing a local area
network between said host computer and remote network terminals positioned in
the restaurant.

12. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 11 further comprising:

a kitchen terminal electrically connected to said local area network and having a display for displaying a portion of said transmitted order information pertaining to a food order, said kitchen terminal adapted to transmit messages back to said host computer indicative of fulfillment of said food order; and

a drink terminal electrically connected to said local area network and having a display for displaying a portion of said transmitted order information pertaining to a drink order, said drink terminal adapted to transmit messages back to said host computer indicative of fulfillment of said drink order.

13. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 11 further comprising a billing terminal electrically connected to said local area network for receiving said transmitted order information and said associated menu selling prices, said billing terminal including means for calculating a total order sales amount and means for printing said transmitted order information and said total order sales amount.

14. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 11 wherein said order information includes at least one customer seating location identifier and at least one food selection associated with said at least one seating location identifier, said at least one food selection corresponding to a respective product record.

15. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 11 wherein said data entry terminal comprises:

a housing having front and back sides, said display positioned on said front side;

4 a handle fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and adapted to be gripped by a
5 waiter's hand for holding said data entry terminal; and
6 a support member fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and having a
7 generally arcuate configuration adapted to rest upon a forearm of a waiter when
8 holding said data entry terminal.

1 16. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 11
2 wherein said means for inputting restaurant order information comprises:

3 means for displaying on said display a graphical representation of a plurality of table
4 locations and a plurality of seat locations associated with each table location;
5 means for displaying on said display a menu of food and drink items corresponding to
6 said plurality of product records in said database; and
7 a keypad and a plurality of buttons on said data entry terminal adjacent said display
8 adapted to enable a waiter to select a table and seat location of a patron whose
9 order is being taken and to select respective food and drink items ordered by said
10 patron.

1 17. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 16
2 further comprising means for displaying a graphical representation of a single table once a
3 waiter has selected a table location of a patron whose order is being taken, said graphical
4 representation of a single table being positioned adjacent said display of a menu of food items
5 upon said display.

1 18. An electronic order and inventory information management system for use in
2 managing a restaurant, comprising:
3 a portable hand-held data entry terminal having a housing with front and back sides and
4 defining an interior space, said data entry device further comprising:
5 a display positioned on said front side;
6 means on said front side for inputting restaurant order information;
7 a transceiver positioned in said interior space for transmitting said order
8 information;
9 a handle fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and adapted to be
10 gripped by a waiter, whereby to hold said data entry unit;
11 a support member fixedly attached to said back side of said housing and
12 having a generally arcuate support member adapted to rest upon an
13 arm of a waiter when said waiter is holding said handle;
14 a database having a plurality of product records associated with food and drink products
15 offered for sale at the restaurant, each product record including at least a menu
16 selling price, a present inventory quantity, and an identifier associated with a
17 vendor;
18 a host computer having a transceiver for receiving said transmitted order information,
19 said host computer including network circuitry for establishing a local area
20 network between said host computer and remote network terminals;
21 a kitchen terminal electrically connected to said local area network and having a display
22 for displaying a portion of said transmitted order information pertaining to a food
23 order, said kitchen terminal adapted to transmit messages back to said host
24 computer indicative of fulfillment of said food order;

25 a drink terminal electrically connected to said local area network and having a display for
26 displaying a portion of said transmitted order information pertaining to a drink
27 order, said drink terminal adapted to transmit messages back to said host computer
28 indicative of fulfillment of said drink order; and
29 means in said host computer for decrementing a respective inventory quantity of a
30 respective product record corresponding to a respective product when said
31 respective product is included in said transmitted order information.

1 19. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 18
2 wherein said host computer is connected to a wide-area network;
3 said order and inventory information management system further comprising means in
4 said host computer for transmitting a signal along said wide-area network to a
5 vendor computer corresponding to a respective vendor identifier when said
6 respective inventory quantity is less than a predetermined quantity, said signal
7 being indicative of an order for an additional quantity of said respective product.

1 20. The order and inventory information management system as in claim 18
2 wherein said means for inputting restaurant order information comprises:
3 means for displaying on said display a graphical representation of a plurality of table
4 locations and a plurality of seat locations associated with each table location;
5 means for displaying on said display a menu of food and drink items corresponding to
6 said plurality of product records in said database; and
7 a keypad and a plurality of buttons on said data entry terminal adjacent said display
8 adapted to enable a waiter to select a table and seat location of a patron whose

9 order is being taken and to select respective food and drink items ordered by said
10 patron.